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New Regulator Outlines Roadmap to Oversee AHR and Surrogacy in Ireland

DUBLIN — The Assisted Human Reproduction Regulatory Authority (AHRRA) has published its first Strategic Business Plan, outlining a comprehensive roadmap to build Ireland's new fertility treatment and surrogacy regulatory framework. Covering the period from 01 July 2026 to 31 December 2027, the plan focuses on building essential operational capacity, recruiting skilled staff, and securing the necessary digital infrastructure ahead of commencing its extensive statutory functions.

Established under the Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024, the AHRRA is a new independent regulatory authority tasked with protecting, promoting, and ensuring the health and wellbeing of children born through assisted human reproduction (AHR), individuals undergoing treatment, and intending parents. Its business plan establishes a phased commencement strategy, targeting the roll-out of a new licensing framework for AHR treatment providers by Q2 2028, and intending to be in a position to begin accepting applications for approval of permitted surrogacy agreements by Q4 2028.

Over the past 12 months, the AHRRA has made significant progress in establishing the foundations for effective and accountable regulation. This has included putting in place strong governance arrangements to support sound decision-making, securing business-critical services, and progressing the recruitment of key personnel to strengthen the Authority's technical and operational capacity. These developments will support the expansion of the organisation across four dedicated directorates, alongside the appointment of external committee members, equipping the Authority to deliver its strategic priorities over the next 18 months.

Key priorities during this period will include developing the licensing criteria and framework for AHR service providers; preparing consultation documents; establishing the policies, procedures and operational processes necessary to discharge the Authority's statutory functions; developing guidance and codes of practice; and implementing the ICT infrastructure required to support five essential statutory databases. These include the Database of Licensed AHR Treatment Providers, the National Surrogacy Register, the Register of Genetic Diseases and the Voluntary Register of Donor-Conceived Persons. Collectively, this work will establish the essential regulatory infrastructure required for the AHRRA to fulfil its mandate effectively, consistently and independently.

Minister for Health, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD said:

"I welcome the publication of AHRRA's Strategic Business Plan today. At its heart, AHRRA is about supporting people on some of the most significant journeys of their lives, while ensuring the interests and wellbeing of children born through assisted human reproduction

remain paramount. As advances in reproductive medicine continue to create new possibilities for families, AHRRA will provide the oversight and assurance needed.

"I look forward to working with the AHRRA team and Board throughout 2027 as we, together, work to ensure our services are safe, ethical and centred on the wellbeing of all involved."

Welcoming the publication, **Professor Deirdre Madden**, Chairperson of the AHRRA Board, stated:

"The establishment of the AHRRA represents a significant milestone in the development of a modern, transparent and rights-based regulatory framework for assisted human reproduction and surrogacy in Ireland. These services involve deeply personal and often life-changing decisions, underpinned by complex medical, scientific, legal and ethical considerations. This Business Plan sets out a clear and practical roadmap for establishing a strong, independent and effective regulator, committed to safeguarding health and wellbeing, upholding rights, and fostering public trust and confidence through safe, ethical and accountable regulation."

Commenting on the operational roll-out, **Mr. Colm O'Leary**, Chief Executive Officer of the AHRRA, said:

“Since my appointment in April 2026, the Board and I have been working to deliver an appropriate workplace environment and build a strong team to enable the AHRRA to deliver effective regulation as quickly as possible for the families who depend upon it.

The AHRRA has an intensive activity schedule planned throughout 2027 that includes building its core ICT licensing and applications systems, producing information documents required under the Act, preparing, consulting and publishing the Code of Practice that will provide guidance to clinics about the conduct of activities licensed under the Act.

Recruitment of key Directorship roles in surrogacy, legal affairs, AHR licensing and compliance and corporate affairs is well underway, and these appointments will contribute to a continued momentum towards establishing our statutory functions.

We are committed to extensive consultation with service users, advocacy and support groups, and treatment providers over the coming months to ensure our frameworks are evidence-informed, practical, and highly robust before our licensing powers commence in 2028."

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